

A
LETTER
FROM A
MEMBER
OF
PARLIAMENT,
TO THE
Freeholders in his County,
On the Present
STATE of the NATION.

Pro Rege & pro Patria Semper.



L O N D O N :

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A
L E T T E R
FROM A
Member of Parliament, &c.

Friends and Countrymen,



NOTHING, could give me a greater Concern, than the spreading *Uneasiness* I perceiv'd amongst you, occasion'd from the *Apprehensions* of *Mismanagement* in publick Affairs, had these *Apprehensions* any solid Foundation, it must be acknowledg'd that the greatest *Uneasiness* possible, might be justified thereby. As your Repre-

sentative therefore in *Parliament*, I thought it my Duty to make the strictest Enquiry imaginable into the State of *publick Transactions*, and shall lay before you in the *plainest*, and most *sincere* Manner, I am able, the best *Judgment* I am capable of forming from thence, especially as to the *Conduct* of *Those*, whom his *Majesty* in his *great Wisdom* has thought fit to intrust, as his *Ministers* for some Years past. That you may no longer be liable to *Fears* without *Foundation*, or entertain *disadvantageous* Sentiments of your *Superiors*, from a want of right *Information* of the *Measures* they pursue.

To enter into too long, or political a Detail of the Foreign Negotiations, and the Reasons that induc'd the present *Government* to enter into the Alliance of *Hanover*, and since into that of *Seville*, would take up a great deal too much *Room*, would be entirely out of your Way of *judging*, and tho' explained with the utmost

Impartiality and Clearness, be yet liable to *Misinterpretation* and a multitude of Objections, which are readily furnish'd by those, who to the *private Interest* that sways them to a Party, have added but a smattering in *Politicks*, assisted with a quick Invention. From Persons of this Cast of *Mind*, there is no Defence, no not for the most *Sacred*, the *Greatest*, or the most Innocent ; we live in an *Age* that pays no Regard to any thing but its own *Humour*, nor can a Ministry easily *repine* at ill Usage of this Sort from their Enemies, at a Time, when they see the Miracles of our Saviour censur'd, and Books printed every Day, turning *Religion* into *Jest*. All therefore that will be necessary for me to say, with Regard to Treaties, shall be compris'd under the clearest Language, and I will enter on those Observations by taking Notice : That altho' the Right of making *Peace* and *War* be an undoubted *Prerogative* of the *Crown*, yet such has been the
laudable

laudable Caution of those in the present Administration, that they have continually caus'd such as have been transacted by them, or thro' their *Advice*, to be laid before the Houses, where after the *most* nice *Examination*, and after all that would be said against them, they have constantly been *approv'd*. If these Treaties have not exactly answer'd those *Effects*, which were expected from them, when made, it must not immediately be imputed to the *Weakness*, or Want of *Capacity* in those who *fram'd* them. It is impossible to arrive at any certain Judgment of the Course of *future Events*, and from this Incertainty, this unavoidable Incertainty it is, that Measures the most *Prudent*, the *most Just*, and *best Concerted*, that human Nature is able to lay down, may be, and frequently are disappointed, from that Contingency natural to sublunary Affairs, and those unforeseen *Accidents*, no Policy can prevent. The
same

same Thing must in private Life be
 obvious to you All, and a little Re-
 flection will, I dare say, furnish
 every one of you with Instances
 enough, of Men, who tho' *Honest*,
Careful, and of the *greatest Capacity*
 in their Employments, have not
 been able to accomplish *the Schemes*
 they have undertaken, even with the
 highest Probability of Success imme-
 diately, tho' a steady *Resolution* has
 seldom fail'd bringing them to bear
 at *last*. 'Tis exactly the same Case
 here, and we ought the more easily
 to acquiesce in it, because we see al-
 most all the Nations in *Europe*, in as
 great, or greater *Delemmas than our*
selves; were *We* the only *People*, that
 had been thro' a long Course of
 Years, engag'd in a Series of *Nego-*
tiations, were *We alone* at the Ex-
 pence of *Fleets and Armies*, to be in
 Readiness to carry these *Negotia-*
tions into Execution, and were we
 the single Nation labouring under
 a Load of *publick Debts and Taxes*,
 there

there would be undoubted Reason for Complaint, against those who by their *Management* had been the Authors of these *Misfortunes*.

But when we see all the *Nations round us*, in Conditions of the same *Kind*, and many in much worse, to what can we *refer it*, but to the Course of *Nature*, and the Vicissitude incident to *Affairs*. As to the *Supplies* which being necessary to carry on these *Steps*, have from time to time been rais'd upon the People, you will readily consider, that from the happy Construction of our *Constitution*, they must have of Necessity the Consent of those very People, by their Representatives, before they could be rais'd at all, this naturally drew the State of the Publick at these Periods, when these Aids were granted, under the *Consideration* of *Parliament*, and when from their *Debates*, the *Sanction* of the *Great Council* of these Kingdoms, is given to the *Councils* of the *Ministry*, 'tis
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Prefumption in private *Persons* afterwards to *dispute* them. But perhaps you will think what I have hitherto said, a little too *general*, let us descend *then* into a few *Particulars* of the *greatest* Moment as the first of these, let us consider, what seems to have given the greatest Appearance of *Plumeworthiness*, that is, the Incertainty which we now for some Years lain under, with regard to *Peace and War*.

Tho' this, together with some hightning *Circumstances* it has artificially been made to *wear*, may at first Sight look like a Thing hard to be *justified*; yet I perswade *myself* that, when you have reflected on the following *Reasons*, you will, in some Measure acquiesce in my *Opinion*; That the whole Weight of this *Misfortune* may be very justly laid to other Doors, than those of the *Ministry*. If in the first Place it be remember'd, in what Condition our Affairs were in, when the Gentle-

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men now in Power, came into the *Administration*, the Difference we have had with *Spain*, which has in Truth been the most *Material* of any, and more *embarass'd* our *Affairs*, may without Dispute be referr'd to the *Conncils* of *those* who preceeded them in the *Royal Confidence*: And the Treatment which that *Nation* then receiv'd from *Britain*, has given them such a Dislike to our *People*, that considering the natural *haughty* and *obstinate Temper* of the *Spaniards*; we could not speedily hope to see *worn off*. But why then say some, do we not to recur harsher *Methods*, the *Fleets* of *Great-Britain* us'd to strike Terror into all her *Enemies*, and even this *haughty People*, with all their *Stubborness*, have been by them in *former Days*, oblig'd to *Bow*. Is the Glory and publick Reputation of our *Country* now grown so little worth our Care, as to suffer the dangerous Insults of the *Spaniards* with *Impunity*? These are very *plau-*
sible

sible Harangues, to a Nation naturally Gallant, and who readily take Fire at any Thing that concerns the publick Honour. But are we not likewise to consider the *Safety* of the Nation, shall we rush into a War with *Precipitation*, when a short Forbearance may secure us in a lasting *Peace*, shall we willfully throw away the *Friendship* of a Country, to which we carry on one of our *greatest* and most *beneficial Branches* of Trade. To satisfy a *Punctilio*, when that very *Punctilio* may as well be satisfy'd by Treaty. Can a Ministry ever be too careful of *exposing* the *Lives* and *Fortunes* of his Majesty's Subjects, by involving them in a War, where the Success is always *doubtful*, and nothing certain but a vast *Expence*? How much Dissatisfaction has been *express'd* against *those*, by whose *Advice* Britain entred into so large a Share in the late War, and after losing so much both of *Blood* and *Treasure*, can be scarce said to reap

any Advantage at all. And here it is necessary for me to mention to you, the *Pretender*, who, tho' as Things *stand now*, is in no Capacity of hurting *us*, and therefore cannot with *Reason* be made the Ground of any *Uneasiness*; yet should we once fall into an open *Rupture*, might be again render'd *Formidable*, thro' a *Policy* we have more then once experienced. His pretended *Alliance* to several of the *greatest Families in Europe*, and his *Bigotry* to the *Popish Religion*, will always be Motives sufficient to induce our *Enemies*, to the endeavouring at least to raise *Commotions* in his *Favour*, which if they have no other *Effect*, would of Necessity encrease the *publick Charge*, a Thing very *undesirable*, in itself, as well as very *Disagreeable* to the *People*. The Alteration in our *Alliances*, is ever mention'd by a *certain Party*, as another *indiscussible Point*, and the epithet *Unnatural*, has been added to them to fill the *Nation*, with *Rancour* against

against those that made them. For my *Part* my *Friends* and *Countrymen*, I profess to you, I have no Attachment to any *Party*. I think it *Unreasonable*, as well as a high *Reflection* on our *Most Gracious Sovereign*, to look on every *Person* in *Power*, as an *Enemy* to his *Country*, nor can I *believe* it a never-failing Sign of a *Patriot*, that a Man is continually of an *Opinion* directly *opposite* to those in the *Administration*. Interest is certainly the Motive of all *National Agreements* *whatever*, and as you cannot be insensible of the *Variations* of it in *private Affairs*, so it ought not to appear to you a Thing so very *extraordinary* in *Publick*, where a multitude of *Concerns* render it more *likely*, and where the Greatness of *Mutations* must of Necessity make them *quicker*. The *Balance* of *Power*, is a *Subject*, that has been so well explain'd, and so often *treated off*, that I cannot doubt your being well enough acquainted with it,

it, to know that for a considerable Space of Time, it meant no more, than keeping the two great Powers of *France* and *Spain*, in *Æquilibrio*: And that it was the constant, as well as most adviseable Practice in all the other Powers of *Europe*, to throw a proper Degree of *Weight* into the *lighter Scale*, whenever either of them grew too pondrous for the other; in such a Case, could it be said with any Colour of Justice, that the *changing Sides*, was an *Unsteadiness in Politicks*, or the being linked with *different Princes*, at *different Times*, and from *different Motives*, be accounted making *unnatural Alliances*. To secure the *Honour*, to preserve the *Tranquility*, and to encrease the *Trade* of our *Nation*, are the most laudable *Designs* that can be had in *View* in any *Negotiation*, and where those *Points* are the *Ends*, for which any *Treaty* is enter'd into, it cannot with any Degree, either of Justice or *Propriety* be stil'd *Unnatural*. Upon these Principles,

Principles, then it cannot but appear to You that the Treaty of *Vienna*, was an *Unnatural* Treaty with Respect to *Spain*, unless some private *Articles* were stipulated in Favour of that *Nation*, which from the *Regard* they had to the rest of *Europe*, hindered them from making *Publick*. Such a Situation of *Affairs*, made it necessary for the other *Powers*, to unite themselves for the *common Defence*, in Case any thing should be attempted against the *publick Tranquility*, by the Allies of that *Treaty*; and this very easily explains the opposite *Measures* enter'd into by the *Confederates* of the *HANOVER Alliance*, which even the meanest Capacity, must perceive, was instead of being *Unnatural*, to be founded on the very first Principle of *Nature*, viz. that of *Self-Defence*. But altho' the then *Emergency* of *Affairs*, oblig'd us to take a Party opposite to *Spain*; yet the great Gain accruing to *Great Britain* from her 'Trade with that Nation,

Nation, did of Consequence engage the Ministry to employ their utmost Care, in re-uniting *Her* to our Interest, which of Necessity must lessen at the same time the Strength of the *Vienna Alliance*, by taking away from it the only *Party*, capable of advancing vast Sums of Money, the true *Sinew* of Modern Wars, and what was still more, adding that very Power, to the Support of our *selves*. This was after some Difficulty happily accomplish'd, by the Peace of SEVILLE, the main Objection to which, is the Stipulations in Favour of DON CARLOS, tho' that whole Affair is so far from an Infraction on former Treaties, as some would suggest, that it is even a Natural Consequence, of those, into which not only *We*, but even the Emperor himself had entred. Yet the Tenderness the present Administration in these Kingdoms, have again shewn, in not pushing our *selves* and all Europe into a general Effusion of Blood, which must have hapned, had the

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the *Engagements* entred into by the last mention'd *Treaty*, been too hastily put in *Execution*, has furnish'd new Matter of *Complaint*, to those, who are resolv'd never to be *satisfy'd*, with any thing the *Ministry* has, shall, or can do. Yet even this *Forbearance* has visibly had its *Effect*, and considering the *Temper* the *Emperor* is now in, it cannot be long, before he complies with those wise, and prudent *Propositions*, that have been made *him*. The Death of the *Duke of Parma*, is another *Incident*, which hapning in this *interim*, has open'd a fair Entrance to an *Accommodation*, no Way *disagreeable* to either of the *hitherto contending Parties*: In *fine*, the Face of *Affairs* at this *Future*, carry so strong an Appearance of a general *Pacification*, being at *Hand*, that I doubt not as the uncertainty of *Things*, (with how little Justice is by this time evident) has all along been ascrib'd to the *fluctuating Measures* of the *Ministry*, so

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even their greatest *Enemies* will not deny them, that *Glory*, so apparently their *Due*, of having by the *Wisdom* of their *Councils*, given a *happy*, *lasting*, and *universal Peace* to *Europe*.

Before I quit this *Topick* of the *State* we are at present in with *Regard* to *Foreign Nations*, I cannot help bestowing a few *Observations* on a *Doctrine*, lately advanc'd with so great *Solemnity* of *Reasoning*, that I find it has made some *Impression* on your *Minds*, viz. that being by our *Scituation* an *Island*, our *Cares* should chiefly regard the *Seas* that *surrounds us*, and our *Politicks* move at as great *Distance*, from those of the *Continent*, as there is between our *Shores*. I confess, as this *Maxim* has sometimes been *dress'd out*, I cannot blame *those* who thro' want of thorough *Knowledge* in such *Affairs*, may have been mislead into an *Opinion*, that there is no *Foundation* for *Foreign Alliances*, and that it is our *Interest*,

terest, to have no *Concern whatsoever* in the *Affairs*, or *Negotiations* of our Neighbours. I will therefore to put them into the clearest Way of thinking that I can on this *Head* ; entreat them to *remember*, that the *Affairs of Europe*, in general, are quite another *Thing* to what they were *heretofore*, or even in the beginning of the last *Century*. Almost all Countries now strike into *Trade*, and it becomes a *Nation* like ours, having so strong a Dependance thereon, to take all imaginable Care, for its *Safety*, *Protection* and *Enlargement*. This will naturally engage us in continual Alliances with those Places, to which we carry on a Trade, and as Factories are establish'd and *British* Effects come to be deposited in any Kingdom, the Concern for the Safety of our own, will of Course give us an Interest in the Government and Affairs, in those Countries where they lie. *Immunities*, *Priviledges*, and *Advantages* in Trade, are seldom granted, but upon

mutual and reciprocal Acts of Friendship between the People, on both Sides. It is of the greatest Consequence to us, to receive the former, and it is ridiculous to expect them, without the latter. Add to all which, that throughout *Europe*, the Naval Strength in General is very much encreas'd, and we cannot but judge it necessary on a cool Reflection, to maintain ourselves in the best Terms possible with Foreigners, when the rich Vessels we have carrying on a Commerce in every Corner of the *World*, may, and frequently have fallen into the Hands of *Enemies*, whose Inferiority in Trade, renders it impossible for us to seek *Reparation* by committing *Depradations* upon them. And if over and above all I have hitherto said, any new *Alliances and Guaranties* have by the *Accession* of the present illustrious *Family* to the *Crown* been render'd *Necessary*, we cannot sure, be so ungrateful as to *repine*. Whenever we
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call to *Mind*, that our own *Safety* and *Prosperity* with *Regard*, both to our *Civil* and *Religious Rights*, depend entirely on their present Majesty's quiet *Possession* of the *Crown*; and that all the *Hopes* we can reasonable form of *perpetuating these Blessings* to our *Posterity* rely solely, on the *Consideration* of these *Kingdoms*, being to be govern'd *hereafter* by their *Descendants*. I hope by this *Time*, that you have as well a clearer *View* of our *Foreign Affairs*, as a better *Opinion* of the *Measures* taken by the *Ministers*, that you see the *Doubtfulness* of our *Scituation* has been owing to the general *Incertainty* of *Affairs* throughout *Europe*; that *Necessity*, not *Unsteadiness*, has sway'd us into our *several Alliances*, and that they are so far from being *Unnatural*, that they have had their *Rise* solely from the *Dictates* of *Nature*, which obliges us to accomodate *ourselves* to the present *Posture* of *Things*, and since it is impossible for us to direct *Events*

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to make *those* that *happen*, contribute as far as they are capable to our *Advantage*. That our being an *Island*, does not absolutely release us from all Manner of *Concern* with the *Continent*, but that on the *Contrary*, there are many *Reasons* which nearly interest us in their *Concerns*. In *fine*, that the several Steps taken by the present *Administration*, have been such as were agreeable to the *Times*, in which they were taken, and such as a due Length of *Time* will in all Probability crown with *Success*.

Let us pass now to the Review of *Domestick Circumstances*, and *impartially* consider, what can be imputed from thence, to the *Conduct* of Men in *Power*. The *Raising*, *Distributing*, and *Accounting* for the *publick Money*, will of *Necessity*, claim the first and greatest Share in our *Observance* : And that all these several Steps, have been conducted, in a Manner agreeable to *Justice*, and conformable to the *Trust* repos'd in those, who had the *publick Revenue*

Revenue under their *Care*, is evident from the *Approbation* of the House of *Commons*, and that after they have had all these *Heads*, under a nice and particular *Examination*. The *publick Debts*, have been *openly*, and *fairly stated*, the *Sinking Fund*, in its present *Condition*, and from which so many happy *Consequences* may reasonably be expected, is wholly owing to the *Wisdom* of the *Noble Person* who is justly, in the highest Degree of *Confidence*, with his *PRINCE*. Had those in our present Administration, like some *Ministers*, in former Reigns, raised Money by the unparliamentary *Methods*, for the Service of their Master, or had procur'd *Grants* of *Land*, Parts of the Antient and Hereditary Domains of the *Crown*, for themselves: Had they embezl'd the *Revenue* of the *Kingdom*, or refus'd when call'd upon, to render the most just and accurate *Account*, there would then be some Reason for Complaint. But when on the contrary, a parlia-
mentary

mentary *Enquiry* into their *Conduct*, has been so far from being avoided out of a Consciousness of *Guilt*, that it has been always sought, as a Justification of their *Measures* from a *Confidence* inseparable from *Innocency*. What Colour is there for our Murmurs?

Let me here entreat your serious Attention to a Point, which when well consider'd, will in a great Measure, put an entire Period to these Differences, and which ought reasonably to heal all those *Disquiets*, which have been for some Time so artfully kept up, and fomented. The Point I mean, is the Authority of the *House of Commons*. It is an undisputed Advantage we enjoy, by preserving thro' their *Means* our *Liberty* entire, while the *Nations* round us, are sunk in Slavery, as well those who tacitly confess their *Condition*, by acknowledging their Government, to be absolute; as those, who in the midst of real *Bondage* and *Oppression*,
still

still please themselves, with keeping up
 a Shew of *Liberty*, and maintaining
 a Form of *Freedom*. By them who
 are the best moderate Representa-
 tives of the *People*, that were ever
 yet known in any Political Sy-
 stem, *Ancient* and *Modern* ; we
 enjoy all the Security of the SPAR-
 TAN EPHORI, with all Dignity
 and Advantage of the ROMAN SE-
 NATE. By them is advanc'd the
 Glory of the *Throne*, while at the
 same time by them are preserv'd,
 the Priviledges of the *People*. To
 them, as to the great *Council* of
 the *King and Kingdom*, belongs the
 Dernier Review of the Publick
 Management of *Affairs*, if the Crimes
 of those in *Power* are complain'd
 of, 'tis their Duty to examine them,
 and if their Guiltiness *appears* the
 Precedents are numerous, how they
 ought and how they have pro-
 ceeded against *them*, if any Mat-
 ter or Papers remain solely in the
 Power of the *Crown*, and yet are
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necessary to be perus'd, for a clear
 Insight into the Behaviour of
 its *Ministers*, an Address to the
 Throne is the Means they make
 use of to procure *them*, and in the
 Reigns of good *Princes*, their *Ad-
 dresses* have always had the Effect
 desir'd. But if instead of this Man-
 ner of *proceeding*, should a Reign
 ever happen in BRITAIN, where
 the King without waiting the In-
 terposition of PARLIAMENT, should
 of himself entreat their *Advice*, where
 his Ministry, instead of being fear-
 ful of the *Scrutiny* of a House of
Commons, (as dreadful to a *Woolsey*,
 a *Buckingham* and a *Danby*) should
 assiduouly endeavour an Enquiry
 into their *Proceedings*, where the true
 State of the *Nation* should Yearly
 be laid open, where its Foreign Ne-
 gotiations are faithfully related, and
 the *Treaties*, *Alliances*, or whatever
 other *Issues* they have produc'd,
 are expos'd to their *Perusal*, where
 the King, shews the utmost Com-
 plaisance

plaisance for the Desires of the
 Subjects, and his *Ministry*, submit
 all their Measures to the Censure
 of the *People*. I say, should such
 a Reign as this, ever happen, let
 not the *British Annals* tell, that
 as we are already remarkable, for
 carrying to the utmost Height our
 Vengeance, against *Evil Ministers* and
indifferent Princes, that the incon-
 stant and natural Ferocity of our
 Tempers has yet gone further, by
 thwarting the Measures of the best
 of *Sovereigns*, and raising Clamours
 against *the wisest and mildest Ad-*
ministration. I know there is no
 Danger of the present Disaffection's
 spreading thro' a tenth Part of the
 Nation, but I could wish for all
 that, the honest and discerning
 Men amongst us would seasonably
 exert themselves, and shew that
 the *British Liberty* is able to subsist
 without the Assistance of Faction,
 and no longer suffer the *Exclamations*
 of

of a *Party* to be mistaken for the
Voice of the *People*.

Let me exhort ye then my
Friends no more to give Ear to
those *Clamours*, suffer your *Representatives*, whom, as the Persons fittest to be trusted with your *publick Affairs*, you have chosen to judge for you. Those *Representatives*, who by the Multitude of good *Laws*, they have pass'd, shew their Affection for the *Interest* of the *Nation*, by their Freedom of *Speech* have supported the *Liberty* and *Independency* of the *Commons*, and by their glorious Act against *Bribery*, have shut out all *Corruption* were it was most to have been feared. Nor entertain so mean, so inconsistent a Thought, as that the *Majority* of that *House*, should exert so much Boldness, Generosity, and publick Spirit, with any other View but the *Interest* of their *Country*; in which they themselves have so large a Stake, and in
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the futher Fate of which, their lateſt Poſterity muſt be ſure to ſhare. Give a proper Allowance to the preſent tumultuous Scituation of Things, when you reflect on the uncertain Poſture of Affairs at home, remember at the ſame Time the general Confuſion of *Europe*. When you are next ſpur'd to be reſtleſs under your *Taxes*, call to Mind the vaſt Sums rais'd by the *Emperor* and *Spain*, and compare their Effects. Here they are rais'd for the Support and Glory of the *Crown*, which in its Turn employs them again amongſt its *Subjects*, preſerv'd thro' its Care, both in *Security* and *Eaſe*. There they are levied, for the *Maintainance* of a prodigious Army, while thoſe who pay them, labour under the continual Preſſure of a *Military Force*. In fine, let it never depart your *Memory*, that thoſe at the Helm, tho' *Great*, are yet but *Mortals*, expect not from them then more

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as *Ministers*, than as *Men* is exacted
from by their *Creator*, and I am
confident, they will stand in need
of no other *Appology* for their
Actions.

I am,

Your constant,

And unbiaſt Friend,

Nestor.

F I N I S.

